

Note: **Bold type** and/or underlining have been added for emphasis in the above verses and quotations.

### Suggested Supplementary Reading

The Holy Word for Morning Revival— Philippians: Week 6, Days 2-3

The Life-study of Philippians, Messages 27-28, 56-59

#### *Our Experience in the Church Life*

“We need forbearance in the church life, especially in our serving together. Suppose a particular sister is serving in a way that is not adequate. The sister serving with her faces at least four options: walk away, join her in serving in her poor way, correct her, or try to improve her. None of these options involves forbearance. If the one sister exercises forbearance, she certainly will not walk away from the other sister. At least for a while, she will join the sister in her serving. Then she will exercise wisdom to see the sister's situation and to determine whether or not she can speak a word of correction or improvement in love. If the sister is not able to receive such a word, the other one needs to wait before saying anything. Eventually, she may have an opportunity to speak not according to her own intention, but according to the leading of the Spirit. This is to exercise forbearance. If we all exercise forbearance, the church will be built up in a wonderful way.

“The virtue of forbearance is all-inclusive. It includes love, kindness, mercy, reasonableness, the ability to fit in, and many other virtues. Perhaps now we can understand why Paul speaks of forbearance toward the end of a profound book on the experience of Christ. When Paul exhorts us to let our forbearance be made known to all men, he is saying something of great significance. No human being is able by the natural life to fulfill such a requirement. Confucius may have been very good, but he was still sinful and fallen. Only the Lord Jesus lived a life full of forbearance, and only Christ can be our perfect forbearance today. The best word to sum up the totality of Christ's human virtues is forbearance. To make known our forbearance is to live a life which expresses Christ; it is to express the Christ by whom we live. Such a life is Christ Himself as the totality of all human virtues. This is Christ as our forbearance.”

*(Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 57, pp. 505-506)*

#### **Prayer Burdens**

1. Pray for the church finance, in particular that the saints offerings would be adequate to cover the church expenses.
2. The ongoing labor among grade six children to usher them into the Kingdom of God. Please pray for them, for other Grade 6 children of the saints, for the friends of the current Grade 6 participants and for the Grade 6 serving saints.
3. Please pray for the Chinese speaking Love Feast and Gospel Meeting at Hall 1 this Saturday from 5:30 until 9:00pm.

#### **Announcements:**

##### **General**

1. **The Donation Receipt Request Forms and Receipts are available**  
The Donation Receipt Request Forms can be picked up at your respective Service Office or from your district leader. Refer to News and Fellowship on this site to see how to process the form (if you have questions).

The official Donation Receipts are also available for pickup at the respective Service Office.

## The church in Toronto

Philippians Week 19

Apr 16 - Apr 28, 2007

### Having Christ as the Secret of Sufficiency (2) — Excellent Characteristics in Living

*Weekly Bible Reading:*

**Philippians 4:5-9**

*Hymns:*

**542; 1174; 589; 403; 590**

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#### **Monday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

##### **Philippians 1:21**

**21** For to me, to live is Christ...

##### **Philippians 4:5a, 6a**

**5** Let your forbearance be known to all men...

**6** In nothing be anxious...

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

#### **The Expression of a Life Which Lives Christ**

“...In the first three chapters of Philippians Paul refers to the inner reality of the experience of Christ. But prior to chapter four, he does not give any illustrations of the outer expression of this reality. If we enjoy Christ and experience Him, we shall have a certain inner reality. Such an inward reality invariably issues in an outward expression. In 4:5-9 we find a full expression of this inward reality, a full expression of a life that lives Christ.

“In 1:21 Paul declares, ‘To me to live is Christ.’ This statement is a testimony of Paul's inner reality. But what is the real expression of a life that lives Christ? This expression is found in the virtues listed in 4:5-9. In the same principle, in chapter two Paul sets forth Christ as our pattern. Suppose we take the crucified and exalted Christ as our pattern. What will be the expression of a life which lives according to this pattern? The expression is in 4:5-9. The same is true with respect to Paul's word in chapter three concerning counting all things loss, even refuse, in order to gain Christ. What kind of expression will there be in a person's life if that one condemns philosophy, rejects culture, and renounces religion, counting them as refuse in order to gain Christ? What kind of life will such a person live, and what will be the practical expression of this life? Once again we would point out that the expression is seen in 4:5-9.

“...The basic factor within Paul motivating him to write this concluding word was the need to show the expression of a life that lives Christ, that takes Christ as the pattern, that counts all religious, philosophical, and cultural things as refuse, and that enjoys Christ as everything. With this as his motivation, Paul composed chapter four as a concluding word to this Epistle.

“The title of this message is ‘Excellent Characteristics of the Christian Life.’ But it could be entitled ‘The Expression of a Life Which Lives Christ’ The latter title is deeper and more profound than the former. This portion of Philippians presents the expression of a life that lives Christ – a life that takes Christ as the pattern and counts all things refuse in order to

gain more of Christ.”

*(Witness Lee, Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 27, pp. 225-226)*

## Tuesday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Philippians 4:5

5 Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near.

### Matthew 5:7

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### **The Expression of a Life Which Lives Christ, cont'd.**

#### 1. A Life of Forbearance

“The first aspect of the expression of a life that lives Christ is forbearance...”

“A life that lives Christ is calm, tranquil, peaceful, and quiet. A life of turmoil, on the contrary, is a life that lives Satan. Forbearance is the most important element of a tranquil life. Forbearance is reasonableness and consideration in dealing with others. To have forbearance is to deal with others without strictness of legal right. If we would live a calm life, we must have forbearance.

#### **a) With Patience, Moderation, and Tranquility**

“Forbearance includes patience and moderation, but goes beyond them. If you have forbearance, you will not argue with others, fight with them, or debate with them. You may have a great deal to say, but you will have patience and moderation in dealing with others and will not say anything in response to provocation or irritation.

“Suppose a group of sisters live together. The most precious sister will be the one who is the most forbearing. When difficulties arise, she will be calm and quiet. Even if others offend her, she will not retaliate. Sisters who lack forbearance, however, may easily react when they are offended. In their living there is no calm, no tranquility, no moderation. A proper Christian life is a life of calm. To live such a life means that we do not argue with people or fight with them.

“Forbearance is versus rivalry and vainglory, two negative things mentioned by Paul. Forbearance is also opposed to murmurings and reasonings. Some saints are given to the pursuit of rivalry and vainglory, whereas others are given to murmurings and reasonings. Whenever we have rivalry, vainglory, murmurings, and reasonings, there is no calm, no tranquility, no forbearance.

“From my experience I have learned that the first aspect of a life which lives Christ is tranquility. If we live Christ, we shall not argue with others. We shall know what is the right time to speak even a calm word. Even a calm statement made at the wrong time can contribute to an argument. If you reply as soon as someone offends you, your word will not be one of forbearance. If someone is angry with you, it is best not to say anything. Exercise forbearance and wait for the right time to utter a calm word. It is especially important for married brothers and sisters to practice this. If your husband or wife is argumentative, be careful about the way you speak. It may be wise not even to call on the Lord aloud. Such a calling may stir up trouble. Instead of speaking outwardly, calm yourself, call on the Lord inwardly, and wait until the situation is tranquil before you say anything.

#### **b) Exercising to be Calm by the Lord's Grace**

“It is easy to teach this, but it is quite difficult to practice it. To live in this way requires grace. When a brother's wife is angry with him, it is very easy for him to be stirred up. He may bristle with anger, and his emotions may boil over. At such a time it is extremely difficult to

ourselves it surely is impossible to have such a life with such an expression. Therefore, we must go on to 4:13, where Paul says, ‘I can do all things in Him Who empowers me.’ All the virtues in 4:8 are the expression of the very Christ in whom Paul could do everything. Based on the whole context of the book of Philippians, we can say that the six virtues in 4:8 are the expression of the living of Christ. These are not mere human virtues, not even the virtues developed according to the teachings of Confucius. These virtues are the expression of the very Christ whom we live.

#### **If Any Virtue and Any Praise**

“Toward the end of 4:8 Paul changes his expression and says, ‘If there is any virtue and if any praise.’ The Greek word for virtue here means excellence, that is, ethical energy exhibited in vigorous action. Praise refers to things worthy of praise, as the companion of virtue. The first six items are categorized as ‘whatever is’; the last two are categorized as ‘if any.’ This indicates that the last two are a summing up of the six foregoing items, in all of which are some virtue or excellence and something worthy of praise.

“Virtue and praise are not two additional aspects, but values of the six aspects already mentioned. Virtue is a general term rather than a specific aspect. There is virtue in truthfulness, dignity, purity, loveliness, rightness, and being well spoken of. The principle is the same with praise: there is something worthy of praise in all these six aspects of the Christian life.

“How excellent is the expression of the life that lives Christ! The six aspects in verse 8 certainly are excellent characteristics of the Christian life. It is excellent to be truthful, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and of good report. In each of these excellent aspects there is some virtue and something worthy of praise. We should ‘take account of these things’; that is, we should think on them, ponder them, consider them.”

*(Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 28, pp. 233-237)*

## Saturday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Philippians 4:9

9 The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### **The Things Learned, Received, Heard, And Seen In The Apostle**

“...Not only should the believers think on the things mentioned in verse 8; they should also practice the things which they have learned, received, heard, and seen in the apostle. To be sure, Paul lived in such a way as to express all the aspects listed in verse 8. Hence, the believers had learned of him, had received from him, had heard of him, and had seen certain things in him. For this reason, Paul charged them to follow him in practicing these things.

“Verse 9 closes with the word, ‘And the God of peace shall be with you.’ This is both a blessing and a promise. The God of peace is the source of all the things mentioned in verses 8 and 9. By fellowshiping with Him and having Him with us, all these virtues will issue forth in our life.

“In verse 7 Paul speaks of the peace of God, and in verse 9, of the God of peace. First he says that the peace of God will guard our hearts and thoughts, then that the God of peace Himself will be with us. Actually the peace of God and the God of peace are one. When God is with us, peace is with us also. The genuine peace we enjoy is God Himself. The way to enjoy the God of peace is by praying to have fellowship with Him.”

*(ibid., pp. 237-238)*

dignity, which inspires and invites reverence. A life that lives Christ will be honorable, noble, grave, solid, weighty, and dignified.

"We should not think that only older people should be weighty. All the young people, even the teenagers, should also have dignity. Even a young brother in junior high school should have dignity, for he has God within him. He is a vessel containing God as his worth, weight, and dignity.

"To have dignity is not to act important; it is to live God. A jewelry box containing a diamond ring has dignity not because of the box itself, but because of the diamond. It is the diamond in the box which gives dignity to the box. In like manner, we are a vessel containing Christ. If we live Him, we shall have true dignity. When others see us bearing such a dignity, they will have a deep respect for us. The dignity implied in the Greek word for honorable always inspires a profound respect. This dignity is the second governing aspect of the expression of a life that lives Christ.

### 3. Whatever Is Righteous

"In verse 8 Paul also speaks of 'whatever is righteous.' This refers to what is right (not just) before God and man. Doing what is right is another governing aspect related to the living of Christ.

### 4. Whatever Is Pure

"The word pure in the expression 'whatever is pure' means single in intention and action, without any mixture. To be pure in this way is to have no pretense. Purity is also a governing aspect of the life that lives Christ.

### 5. Whatever Is Lovely

Yet another governing aspect of such a life is 'whatever is lovely.' The word 'lovely' means lovable, agreeable, endearing.

### 6. Whatever Is Well-Spoken Of

"Next Paul goes on to mention 'whatever is well-spoken of.' This means whatever is of good repute, renowned, attractive, winning, and gracious. The Greek word means sounding well.

"In verse 8 Paul does not mention kindness, patience, or holiness. Instead, he mentions six items which are governing aspects of a life that lives Christ. If we live Christ, we shall surely have a life that is an expression of all these aspects. In our living there will be no falsehood, looseness, or lightness. Instead, our living will be honorable, pure, right, lovely, and well-spoken of. Of the many, many Christian virtues, Paul selected these six as governing aspects.

"Here I wish to point out that all human virtues were created by God. According to Genesis 1:26, we were made in God's image. Our human virtues are a vessel made to contain the divine virtues, just as a glove is made in the image of a hand to contain the hand. The Bible reveals that the image of God is Christ (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4). Therefore, to say that man was made in the image of God means that he was made according to the form of Christ. Man was created according to Christ so that he could contain Christ and express Him. A glove is designed in the pattern of a hand so that it can contain the hand. Likewise, man was designed by God to bear the pattern of Christ. When Christ comes into a person, that person becomes a vessel containing Christ.

"Romans 9 indicates that we are vessels to contain the glory of God. The glory of God denotes the expression of God, and this expression is Christ. Human virtues such as truthfulness, dignity, purity, and loveliness are all aspects of man as a vessel to contain Christ as the reality."

"If we consider carefully the virtues listed in 4:8, we shall have to confess that there is no way for us to live such a life in ourselves. The ethical teachings of Confucius are very high, but they are inferior to Paul's instructions here in Philippians. I studied Confucius' writing entitled The Highest Learning, but it cannot compare to the virtues mentioned by Paul. In

calm down and be tranquil. For this, we need the Lord's grace. It takes much grace to be forbearing in this kind of situation. But if we exercise to be calm by the Lord's grace, the atmosphere will eventually become tranquil. Then there will come a proper time to speak a calm word.

"I have wondered why after covering such profound matters in the first three chapters, Paul says in 4:5, 'Let your forbearance be known to all men.' Compared with what Paul has already covered, forbearance seems to be a secondary matter. However, in a very practical way, forbearance is a test of whether or not we live Christ."

*(ibid., pp. 227-228)*

## c) Experiencing the Excellent Virtues of Christ's Humanity

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good manner of life his works in meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which descends from above, but is earthly, soulish, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition are, there disorder and every worthless practice are. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, forbearing, compliant, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

*(NTRcV, James 3:13-17)*

## Wednesday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Philippians 4:6

6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

### Matthew 6:25b

25 ...Do not be anxious for your life, what you should eat or what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put on...

### 1 Peter 5:6b-7

6 ...be humbled under the mighty hand of God...

7 Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

## **The Expression of a Life Which Lives Christ, cont'd.**

### 2. A Life Without Anxiety

#### a) "In Nothing"

"In verse 6 Paul goes on to say, 'In nothing be anxious.' Often when we hear bad news, we worry and fall into anxiety. Anxiety undermines the living of Christ. Instead of being anxious, in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving we should make our requests known to God. Then the peace of God will guard our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (v. 7). The peace of God saves us from worry and anxiety. Paul's word here proves that our interpretation of these verses according to our experience is correct. Being free from anxiety is for the purpose of keeping us calm and tranquil.

#### b) "In Everything"

"In verse 6 Paul charges us 'in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.' The words 'in everything' refer to the many different things which happen to us day by day. Under the Lord's blessing, many positive things happen, and we hear good news. However, we also experience negative things and hear bad news. Nevertheless, in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, we should

make our requests known to God. Prayer is general with the essence of worship and fellowship; petition is special for particular needs. Notice that Paul says ‘with thanksgiving,’ not ‘and thanksgiving.’ This indicates that both our prayer and petition should be accompanied by thanksgiving to the Lord. It may seem easy to understand Paul’s word, ‘Let your requests be made known to God.’ But we should not take this word for granted, assuming that we understand it. I have spent considerable time studying the phrase ‘to God.’ It may also be rendered ‘before God’ or ‘in the presence of God.’ The Greek preposition is *pros*, often translated ‘with’ (John 1:1; Mark 9:19; 2 Cor. 5:8; 1 Cor. 16:6; 1 John 1:2). It denotes motion towards, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship. Hence, the force of ‘to God’ here is in fellowship with God. We should let our requests be made known to God in such a fellowship, in such a union and communion. This requires that we pray to contact God.

“In our prayer to God there must be the essence of worship and fellowship, and also petitions for particular needs. Even if we do not have specific needs, we still need a time of prayer day by day to worship the Lord and have fellowship with Him. As we worship the Lord and have fellowship with Him in prayer, we enjoy communion with Him and practice the organic union with Him.

*(Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 27, pp. 229-230)*

## Thursday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Philippians 4:7

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses every man’s understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

### John 16:33b

33 ...in Me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

### Colossians 3:15a

15 And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts...

### Philippians 4:9b

9b ...the God of peace will be with you.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### **The Expression of a Life Which Lives Christ, cont’d.**

#### 3. The Antidote to Anxiety

“The issue, the result, of practicing the organic union with the Lord is that the peace of God guards our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (v. 7). The peace of God is actually God as peace (v. 9), infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer. This peace is the counterpoise of troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).

“Bad news or difficult situations may cause us to worry or to be anxious. We find the antidote to this anxiety when we pray, practice communion with God, and enjoy the organic union. Then spontaneously, even unconsciously, the peace of God is transfused into our inner being. This transfused peace becomes the counterpoise of trouble and becomes the antidote to anxiety. From experience we know that through prayer we receive this antidote to anxiety when the peace of God is infused into us. Having the peace of God as the counterpoise to our troubles does not mean that the troubles will disappear. The troubles remain, but we have a counterpoise. Furthermore, the poison of anxiety is still within us, but we have an antidote – the peace of God transfused into our being through our fellowship with God in prayer. When we enjoy God as our peace, we are made calm within.

“In verse 7 Paul says that the peace of God will guard our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus. The Greek word rendered ‘guard’ may also be rendered ‘mount guard over.’ The God of peace patrols or stands guard before our hearts and thoughts in Christ. The heart is the source, and the thoughts are the issue. The peace of God guards both our hearts and our thoughts. This means that in Christ Jesus the peace of God patrols as a guard who goes back and forth before our hearts and our thoughts. The peace of God which patrols within our inner being in such a way keeps us calm and tranquil. Even though we may have many troubles and much anxiety, nothing will disturb us. This is not a mere teaching, but a word which corresponds to our experience. From experience we know that the peace of God infused into us keeps us calm.

“Toward man we need the forbearance mentioned in verse 5, and with God we need the fellowship to which Paul refers in verses 6 and 7. As two leading aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ, forbearance and fellowship cause us to remain calm inwardly. In this way we shall become a tranquil people. This does not mean, however, that nothing negative will happen to us. Rather, it means that we need not be disturbed by negative things. Do not complain about your living situation. Live Christ! The first expression of your living of Christ will be forbearance.

“To say that we should be forbearing and free of anxiety does not mean that every day we shall receive only good news. Quite often Satan will send us bad news. But we need not be troubled by this bad news, for we have the peace of God, God Himself as peace, within us, guarding our inner feelings. However, if we would experience this peace of God, we need to pray and have fellowship with God.

“In 4:5-7 Paul does not mention a third thing apart from forbearance and not having anxiety. Instead, he simply points out two important aspects of a life that lives Christ – that we have forbearance, but no anxiety. When we are forbearing and free from anxiety, we are kept tranquil and in a calm atmosphere. Then we can live Christ and have the full enjoyment of Christ.”

*(ibid., pp. 230-232)*

## Friday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Philippians 4:8

8 Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things.

### 1 John 3:18-19a

18 Little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue but in deed and truthfulness.

19 And in this we will know that we are of the truth...

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### **Six Governing Aspects of a Life that Lives Christ**

#### 1. Whatever is True

“The first governing aspect of a life that lives Christ is ‘whatever is true.’ The word true here means truthful ethically, not merely true in matter of fact. In the expression of a life that lives Christ there can be no falsehood, no lying. Everything we do or say must be truthful. No one who lives Christ should practice falsehood of any kind. A life that is the expression of Christ is a truthful one.

#### 2. Whatever Is Honorable

“The second aspect is ‘whatever is honorable.’ The Greek word rendered honorable means venerable, worthy of reverence, noble, grave (1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2), implying the idea of